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S H O C H I K U

KABUKI PLAY. "SHIKORO BIKI"
(PULLING THE HELMET FLAPS)

ONE ACT

Special

WRITTEN BY : KAWATAKE MOKUAMID

MUSIC BY : LUTE PLAYERS

ICGIDNVE2036



TO BE PRESENTED BY EBIZO TROUPE AT MITSUKOSHI HALL
FROM APRIL 3rd, TO APRIL '47

SYNOPSIS:

Tadamitsu's younger sister Fuseya climbed Mt. Maya with her attendants so as to offer the treasured halberd of the Heike clan to the Kwannon temple there and ^{to} make supplication to Goddess. Thereupon Kajiwara's retainer Chuta wanted to snatch it from her and struggled with her.

In the meantime, Kagekiyo disguised as a beggar and Miho-No-Tanishiro disguised as a strolling flute player met with each other in the mountain.

Miho-No-Tani spoke ill of his Clan Genji while Kagekiyo abused his clan Heike and they tried to sound each other's mind.

Just then Fuseya and Chuta came out struggling each other when Miho-No-Tani and Kagekiyo seized their sword and halberd from them respectively. After a while Miho-No-Tani accosted Kagekiyo and detected that he was none other than Akushichi^hyo~~e~~-Kagekiyo.

Whereupon they struggled with each other like the scene of the Sea Battle Off Yashima Island.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

Beggar Shichibe, in reality Akushichihyoe-Kagekiyo.

Strolling Flute Player Jirozo, in reality, Miho-No-Tanishiro-Kunitoshi.

Priest Tonnen.

Priest Unnen

Banba Chuta

Numbers of Soldiers

Hase Saburo

Tadamitsu's Younger Sister Fuseya

[Faint mirrored bleed-through from reverse side]

THE SCENE OF MT. MAYA, SESSHU PROVINCE

The main stage has a scenery of the mountain on both sides and in front. The branches of the pine-trees spread over the awning. On the left there is a tower made out of stone. Beside it there is a sign-post with the letters Mt. Maya, Sesshu Province written on it.

With the sound of a blast of wind from the mountain, the curtain rises. Immediately after that, religious meditation is practised. A priest comes out of the stage passage with a lighted pine torch in his hand, followed by Tonnen and Unnen, priests, carrying offerings on a wooden stand.

Tonnen: Hey, hey, Unnen, why must we carry the offerings from the temple at the foot of the mountain to the Kwannon temple at midnight?

Unnen: Gracious me! Haven't you known such a thing?

According to yesterday's information from the camp of the Heike clan to this mountain, this evening they will visit the temple as proxy so as to offer the treasured halberd "Hirumaki" of the House of Heike there.

Besides, from this evening on they will keep vigil for seven nights in succession for the success of arms of the House of Heike.

T: That's why the temple is torn up a great deal, I think.
Now I understand the circumstances. It's now duty for such a low-ranking priest as me to bring offerings there.

Priest: I'm afraid the bell will soon strike nine.

U: Before the night gets far advanced.

Both: Let's bring offerings there.

(Just then from the interior a man's voice is heard.)

Chuta: No, you mustn't take the offerings there.

(The wind from the mountain blows violently. From behind the tower comes out Baba-No-Chuta wearing a wood-cutter's clothes, a mountain sword and a hood.)

T: Wait a mountain! A suspicious-looking guy has appeared from the mountain at such midnight.

U: Are you a god or a man?

Three: What are you?

Chuta: Shut up!

I'm a wood-cutter, so it's my business to appear in the mountain at any time in the night.

T: Well, then, are you a wood-cutter, but what for +-----?

U: Have you come out to keep us from bringing the offerings-----
the offerings from the House of Heiko?

C: So I've understood. That's why I've prevented you from doing so.

Offerings should be done by us instead of them.

Listen! Although the Heike family have enjoyed their prosperity up to now, their influence is doomed to decline sooner or later. It's no use making prayers for the success of ~~their~~ their arms. The reason is as follows:

People are sure to have their ups and downs in the life.

Now the Genji family are in their full sway.

In the Kanto District there is Yoritomo, a member of the family while in the city there are Noriyori and Yoshitsune of the same family.

As for the Heike family, however, all of them evacuated the city and confined themselves to Ichinotani Valley, but their fate is just like that of a morning-glory right before evening and is sure to decline.

Under such circumstances, some might secede from the Camp of Heike. It's my duty as an agent to catch those people.

I'm a retainer of Kajiwara and my name is Bamba-No-Chuta.

All: Bravo!

C: If you take sides with the Heike family and make prayers for their success of arms, you'll be surely sentenced to death. I tell you to bring back those articles to the foot of the mountain.

All: But we cannot disobey our chief priest.

C: If you complain of it, you shall die. (Puts his hand on the hilt of the sword.)

All: Wait a moment, please.

C: Well, then, will you throw away those articles?

T: Yes, we shall have to throw them away even if we act against our honourable chief priest's orders.

U: We needn't exchange them for our lives.

Both: Merciful Goddess of Kwannon, please allow us to do so.

(Saying so, they throw away the offerings placed on the wooden stand.)

C: Oh, well said! I've understood your true mind. Now here is for you. (Gives some money to each of them.
All take money and get astonished.)

All: What do you mean?

C: That's for your tonight's labour.

All: Why?

C: Well, a while ago I overheard you saying that they would bring the treasured halberd of their family.
Now I'll tell you. Since Kiso-Yoshinaka was destroyed, in the city we had held military conferences every day. In order to beguile my monotonous time, I frequented the red-light district of Shimabara out of my youthful spirit, which incurred my master's displeasure and, as a result I was obliged to hide myself in the field or the mountain. Happily I've heard a good news from you.
I should like to snatch the halberd from them and hand it to my master so as to apologize to him for my follies. If so, I shall be allowed by him to be reinstated in the service for my meritorious deed.

Should I succeed in it with your co-operation, I would ask him to employ you and to give each of ^{you} ~~us~~ a temple; *anyway* you mustn't fail in it, as you have such an expectation.

All: Okay.

C: Listen! There are heard many people's voices in the direction of the foot of the mountain.

I'm sure they are going to visit the temple as proxy.

All: Now we much do our first service.

C: Hide yourselves.

All: Very well.

(Thereupon all of them hide themselves in the mountain. Religious meditation is practised by the group of people. From the stage passage two priests carrying lighted pine torches in their hands come out, followed by soldiers with the halberd with them. Following them, Hase Saburo dressed in a "haori" coat and a pleated skirt comes out to the stage, followed by Fuseya rolling up her sleeves and guarding the halberd.

Hase: Well, everybody, you must be on the alert.

All: Certainly. (Look round)

Hase: Since the enemy camp is in this neighbourhood, we secretly took the by-path of Mt. Maya at midnight instead of in the daytime for the purpose of worshipping the temple as proxy. I don't imagine the enemy has took notice of our coming. Fuseya-dono, now you'd better set your mind at rest.

Fuseya: Saburo-dono and the others, I thank you for the trouble you have taken. Since my elder brother Gorobē-Tadamitsu-dono is occupied with his military affairs, I've taken his place and am to worship at the temple as proxy.

However, even in the daytime, monkey's cries terrify us. This high mountain looks horrible and especially now at night the wind is blowing hard till the pine-trees and oak-trees droop.

H: For what reason have you determined to worship at the temple as proxy in this ghastly mountain?

All: Please tell us the reason for it.

F: No wonder you want to know about it.

The reason why I must worship at the temple as proxy under cover of darkness and have left the fortress of Ikuta village is this: Recently our lord has been ill in bed, so his mother Nun Suke-No-Tsubone has been very much worried about him and had offerings presented at many mountains for the recovery of his illness. Since in the City Noriyori and Yoshitsune are trying to send troops against him, she is very anxious about his illness. After a secret consultation, Nun has determined to have the treasured halberd of the House offered at the Kwannon Temple for his success of arms, as happily she is a devotee of Kwannon Goddess. For the purpose she has asked me to worship at the temple as proxy secretly tonight.

H: Anyway prayers offered at the Kwannon Temple of this temple are magical in effect, I hear. Even Akushichihyoe-Kakekiyo-dono is also a devotee of Kwannon Goddess and has often visited the Shimizu Temple and that of this mountain, you know. Especially Nun is a faithful believer in Kwannon Goddess, so I'm sure the wishes will be granted.

(Just then the bell strikes nine.)

Oh, that bell announces the "time of Rat."

F: Well, then, Saburo-dono.

H: Fuseya-dono.

F: I'll accompany you.

(Just then from behind the mountain the three priests steal out and seize the halberd when Saburo and Fuseya glare at them)

H: Don't do violence, you rascals.

F: Watch out!

All: Very well.

(They have a rough-tumble with the three priests.

After all Saburo draws his sword and goes to the right running after the priests.

The attendants who have followed Fuseya scatter and run off to the left. Meanwhile, Fuseya takes up the halberd and goes to the right when Chuta stands in her way and grapples with her.)

Fuseya: Since you're interested in this halberd, you must also be a thief.

Chuta: Oh, no, I ain't a thief. I'm Kajiwara's trusted retainer Bamba-No-Chuta.

Since I incurred my master's pleasure, I want to apologize to him by giving him the article.

Hand it to me without resistance.

F: Well, then, you're a follower of Kajiwara whose name is notorious for his wickedness among the warriors of the Genji Clan. This isn't a battle-field where you are expected to fight desperately. You're going to do violence to a woman. Like your master, you're a cowardly, dull warrior. Although I'm a woman, I'm Tadamitsu's

younger sister Fuseya! I won't hand this article to you so easily.

C: None of your cheek!

(Both of them have a rough-tumble with each other and go to the right. With a signal, the stage-settings of the mountain and the sign-post are pulled away when the sound of a blast of wind from the mountain is made and the satsuma (lute) is played:

"It is said that generals are expected to take counsel together in their camp. However, they need their brave subjects. Here Akushi~~hyoe~~^{to}-Kagekiyo and Miho-No-Tanishiro-Kunitoshi are ^{to} develop the reproduction of the sea battle off Yashima Island by pulling their helmet flaps together.

The curtain with the mountain drawn on it drops.

The stage has old pine-trees at several places. The awning is covered with the hanging branches of the pine-trees. The stage-settings are placed in their positions. All of a sudden, with ^{the} flapping ^(of wings), the notes of various kinds of birds are heard. On the right side Akuchi~~hyoe~~-Kagekiyo covering his body with a rush-mat and his cheeks with a worn-out towel like a beggar and on the left side Miho-Tanishiro-Kunitashi dressed like a strolling flute player and wearing a canopy on his head sit down on rocks with a bonfire between them.

Beside the bonfire there is placed a bottle of rice-wine.

Both of them look up at the sky and stretch themselves.)

Miho: What's the matter?

In the days of Emperor Bu in old China, Bobu was sent on a mission when all the birds started singing, it is said.

Although it's still in the middle of spring, I wonder why all the birds have started shrieking at night even at this high mountain.

Kagekiyo: The May wind is blowing violently as if blowing away rain and earth.

Even an ambushade would be frightened out of their wits at the sound of the bell.

Now I've counted the sound of the bell and known it's the time of the earlier part of "Rat." At this time of the night birds ought to have been at roost, but they left the twigs and are flying in mid-air.

M: They are shrieking and flying in groups over the deep ravine over here at Mt. Maya.

K: Have they been startled at the storm from the mountain?

M: Have they been run after by birds of prey, I wonder?

K: Very nosily!

Both: Indeed!

(Kagekiyo takes off the towel while Miho takes off the canopy and they closely look up at the sky. With a violent sound of the wind, the birds fly away. Both of them exchange glances with each other.)

K: You seem to be astonished at the flapping of wings now.

At a high mountain and a glen, we must expect to have a more ghastly experience.

M: Well, you seem to be more surprised at the flapping of wings than I. As the proverb goes, "A fugitive is terrified even at the ears of a pampas grass."

Judging from your attitude, you are -----.

K: Well, I live under a blue sky. Since I renounced the world and am as good as a beggar, how could I be astonished at such a thing? Although I'm now in such a sad plight, I used to be a devotee of Kwannon Goddess and to go on a pilgrimage to the Kwannon temples throughout the length and breadth of the country and my name is Shichibē.

M: Well, then I understand you have done a lot of pious acts before. I'm also on a journey for training myself and for the happiness of my future life and Jirozō is my name.

K: Oh, you're a sensible guy. Well, then, I understand you also wish for the happiness of your future life.

M: You've journeyed to the sacred places of the country, Shichibē-dono

K: You're a strolling flute player, Jirobē-dono.

M: I unexpectedly lost my way.

K: And I asked you to give me a light and enjoyed a chat with you.

M: Even what one passes by another

K: Bears some relation to each other.

M: Happily here.

Both: We have met.

(Music starts. Kagekiyo talks to Miho while building a fire of sticks.)

K: Now, now, what do you say to talking with each other by the bonfire tonight?

M: That's exactly what I was going to ask you.

Both you and I have made a tour of all the places of the country, so we could gossip about the world. However, what I should like to hear especially from you is your story of life. Although you went on a pilgrimage to the holy places of the western district and did pious acts, why have you fallen into such a miserable condition?

- K: It was just last spring that I became so miserable. After leaving Shikoku Island of the western district, I came here all the way, but I had a fit of my chronic disease at the foot of Mt. Nachi in the neighbourhood of the Kintai Temple. Since then I spent all my travelling expenses on the charges for medical treatment, so I was obliged to live by begging. But what I can live now owes Yoritomo-sama now residing in Kamakura. I hear the general named Yoshitsune has made a raid on the City, so all the people of the Heike Clan will soon be put to rout.
- M: Oh, no; ^{even} among the people of the Heike Clan, there are also a great many believers in God or Buddha, so I don't think the Genji Clan will so easily rule over the country.

K: Why?

- M: Now I'll tell you the reason for it. Although now Yoritomo became very influential at Kamakura, what he is today owes Nun Ike-No-Zenni's pity. If Yoritomo-dono hadn't been saved by her then, he would have been beheaded and now the Heike family would be in their fully glory. Don't you think so?

K: Oh, no, it's rather overstrained.

M: Why is it overstrained?

- K: Well, I'll tell you of evidences for it. In the battle of Taikimon, the Heike Clan won the victory by chance. Apart from it, however, the enemy general Yoshitomo fell in love with Toki who had lived a chaste life though he had his own wife and children, forcibly won her heart and seduced her. If he had been stuck on her, he ought to have saved all her children. However, Kiyomori-dono fixed the guilt on each of them and tried to kill them. Because of his influence, he forgot his human nature and tried to take such a cruel way. Thereupon Nun Ike-No-Zenni was unable to remain a mere spectator and begged him to save their lives out of her human

feelings. Moreover, Yoritomo-dono was saved his life, and was exiled to Itto, Izu Province instead. But what he is now today owes his fate rather than the obligations of the Heike family. Don't you think so?

M: Oh, no; you've got a prejudice in favour of the Genji Clan. Even a commoner of humble birth oughtn't to forget obligations he has received from others.

Especially Yoritomo-dono is now a fine general, so it is human nature for him to repay good to them at least once for his former obligation.

K: Oh, you're very obstinate. If it's for the sake of the world, it's the way of a warrior to kill even his father.

M: Oh, no; you're what is called a pro-^GGenji mania^Q. If man forgets his obligation, he is inferior even to a brute. Yoritomo isn't a man in the truest sense of the term, so if Heaven punishes him, he won't be able to win this battle.

K: Hum, up to now you've spoken ill of Yoritomo-sama angrily.

Well, then, have you any relation to the Heike Clan?

M: Oh, no, I've no relation to it, but, I have a great prejudice in favour of the Heike Clan.

K: Well, then, do you favour the Heike Clan?

M: Yes, very much. But although you're a beggar, from the first I've wondered why you've sided with the Genji Clan.

K: Well, I warmly favour the Genji Clan, you know.

M: You side with the Genji Clan while I take the part of the Heike Clan. They are friend and foe. Now we've finished talking.

K: Since I've no weapon with me, I'll seize you by the nape of the neck with might and main instead of the helmet flaps.

M: If you want to pull me back, I'll advance so as to throw you away. Now in my imagination the roar of the sea and the sound of the ~~far~~ footsteps come within hearing.

K: With the plovers off the shore, the morning storm is blowing against the high pine-trees.

M: Shall I wrest off your arms?

K: Shall I wrench off your neck?

M: How strong your arms are!

K: What a tough neck you have!

M: Hum!

K: Hum!

Both: Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

(Just then the violent sound of the wind is heard. With a thud, a mirror drops from the twigs of the pine-tree in front.

Both of them get astonished and jump back. Just at the moment from the right Chuta carrying the halberd under his arm and from the left Fuseya with her sword drawn come out in search for the mirror. Chuta runs into Kagekiyo and strikes at him while Fuseya bumps against Miho and stabs at him.

Thereupon Kagekiyo snatches the halberd from Chuta's hand and kills him while Miho takes the sword from Fuseya and kills her and they seem to be lost in thought.

Kagekiyo intentionally puts out the bonfire.)

K: How weird!

The wine of the bottle which I've expected to drink has been turned over; the bonfire has gone out; and the night is far advanced. I don't want^t to spend the night in such a cold place. Well, then, I'll go out to the town of Arima for begging left-over rice.

(An "utai" or a Japanese lyrical drama is recited:

"My name will be made known when the tide ebbs."

With the sounds of musical instruments, Kagekiyo goes to the stage passage when Miho-No-Tani calls him back.)

M: Wait, Kagekiyo! wait a moment, Akushichi^hbyoe-Kagekiyo!

K: Oh! (Seems to be lost in thought.)

M: Now that I've called you by name, you cannot step back, can you?

K: I'm a beggar while you're a strolling flute player, so it won't be a di^sgrace to me even if I draw back, I should say.

M: Oh, no, I ain't a mere strolling flute player, but in reality I'm your strong enemy Miho-No-Tanishiro-(Draws his sword) Kunitoshi.

K: What?

M: You go by the name of Devil Kagekiyo, so it's a disgrace to your to step back, isn't it?

K: Now that you've recognized me, it'll be of no use to keep my name in secret.

As you've said, I'm a well-known hero in the Heike Clan, stronger than a devil and Akuchibyoe-Kagekiyo is my name. Come nearer to me and look closely at (Draws his sword) my face. (Gets himself ready for fighting.)

M: As I've thought.

K: What I've disguised myself as a beggar is to assassinate my old enemy Yoshitsune.

However, Shiro-Kunitoshi, you've seen through my intention, so first of all I'll cut off your head.

M: None of your cheek!

(Thereupon Miho takes off his coat when his armour is shown.)

An utai starts: "Then from the camp of the Heike Clan they

started a battle; they rowed a fighting boat up to the shore, got off at the beach and waited for the enemy on land."

The mountain wind blows violently. Kagekiyo comes to the stage and strikes at Miho-No-Tani with the halberd when Miho-No-Tani parries the blow with his sword; both of them have a rough-tumble with each other and put on airs. With the sounds of the musical instruments, they glare closely at each other. After a while Miho-No-Tani's sword is broken. During the rough-tumble, the mirror drops from Kagekiyo's pocket. Just then Chuta attacks Kagekiyo unawares ~~when Kagekiyo~~ ~~unawares~~ when Kagekiyo kills Chuta with the halberd.)

K: Uh!

M: Hum. (Kicks back Chuta very well when the moon comes out from among the mountains.
Both of them gaze at each other when the wooden clappers are beaten.

Both: Ha, ha, ha, ha! (Laugh. The mountain storm starts.)

----- CURTAIN -----